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## Senator Kuipers Announces Cost Cutting Measures for School Districts

*Education Flexibility Legislation Stems from Testimony  
Received in Education Committee*

(LANSING) – Testimony received from school administrators during a series of informational hearings has been transformed into legislation designed to save school districts funds in their operating budgets, state Senator Wayne Kuipers, R-Holland, announced today.

“This legislative package is the result of suggestions received from local school administrators in an effort to formulate measures that will assist school districts in cutting operating costs to K-12 education,” Kuipers, chair of the Senate Education Committee said. “In these difficult economic times it is necessary that the Legislature take appropriate steps in ensuring that all Michigan children receive the best education possible. I am thankful to all the administrators who came forth and provided us with the necessary information to develop this policy.”

Over the last three weeks the Senate Education Committee, chaired by Senator Kuipers, invited local school administrators to come forth and testify to the committee suggestions on how school districts across the state can save money in their operating budgets.

Based on those suggestions a five-bill school flexibility package was introduced today in the state Senate:

- **Eliminating state law that mandates districts and public school academies to conduct a minimum of 180-days of instruction.** The legislation would allow the district to choose whether to shorten their school week or their school year, although the district must still meet the minimum number (1,098) of hours in the school year. Sponsor: Senator Valde Garcia, R-Howell.

(More)

- **Streamlining the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI).** Currently, data submitted by schools is submitted to CEPI and numerous other state agencies. This bill requires that all data submissions will be made directly to CEPI. Sponsor: Senator Nancy Cassis, R-Novi.
- **Eliminating Professional Development Requirements.** Currently, new teachers must have 15 days of professional development within the first three years along with five days of professional development per year. School districts pay for these services in addition to paying for substitute teachers. The legislation will assist in helping districts save money on a service that many administrators believe is currently ineffective. Sponsor: Senator Alan Cropsey, R-DeWitt.
- **Eliminating restrictions on the use of at-risk and school readiness funds.** The removal of these requirements will allow schools to use the money to benefit students as they see fit. Schools are still free to spend categorical funding in their current manner, while others may decide they have more pressing needs. The flexibility empowers school districts to find the best use for every dollar during tight economic times. Sponsor: Senator Kuipers.
- **Eliminating “Education Yes!”** The state accreditation plan is often duplicative of the federal No Child Left Behind plan. According to the legislation, districts will still be required to compile an annual report, provide a core curriculum and administer tests in grades one through five. The legislation also removes monetary penalties for schools who do not comply with state accreditation mandates. Sponsors: Senator Bev Hammerstrom, R-Temperance, and Senator Shirley Johnson, R-Royal Oak.

The five-bill legislative package has been sent to the Senate Education Committee for consideration.

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**Editor’s Note: Comments from Senator Kuipers on the school flexibility legislation will be available for download after 3 p.m. at:**  
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/kuipers/index.htm>